

Bradford-Huntington House
16 Huntington Lane
Norwichtown
New London County
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-247

HABS
CONN
6-NORT

5-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-247

BRADFORD-HUNTINGTON HOUSE

HABS
CONN

6. NOR.

5-

Location: 16 Huntington Lane, Norwichtown, New London County, Connecticut.

Present Owner: Francis J. Plank, 16 Huntington Lane, Norwichtown, Connecticut.

Present Occupant: Owner.

Present Use: Residence.

Brief Statement of Significance: This pre-revolutionary, large frame house, with many interesting original features, was the home of Gen. Jabez Huntington.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Originally owned by John Bradford, a son of Governor William Bradford of Plymouth. In June 1691, Simon Huntington, Jr. bought the property with a "new dwelling house" on it. The property passed to Simon's son, Joshua Huntington, in 1719, and later to Joshua's son, General Jabez Huntington, who took part in the Revolutionary War. The house remained in the Huntington family until the present owners bought it from Edith Huntington Wilson.
2. Date of erection: The house was apparently built in several sections, all pre-Revolutionary, beginning with John Bradford's "new dwelling house" before 1691. The authorities do not agree which part of the present structure is John Bradford's "new dwelling house," nor is it readily apparent on inspection. Mrs. Chase ("History in Towns: Norwich, Connecticut" and in the Bulletin, October 8, 1935) says that Bradford's house consisted of two rooms with a gambrel roof, now the library or southwest room. Additions to this original section Mrs. Chase attributes to Simon Huntington, Jr. Thomas M. Crosby, Jr. ("The Bradford Huntington House, Norwich, Connecticut") says the earliest part of the house, Bradford's "new dwelling house," is the old dining room or northeast room built by a Thomas (not John) Bradford, whom he identifies as a proprietor of Norwich. The second stage in the construction of the house, built by Simon Huntington, Jr. between 1691 and 1719, Mr. Crosby identifies as the dining room and entrance hall adjoining the old dining room. Mr. Crosby identifies a third stage, built

HABS
CONN
5

before 1740, consisting of the parlor, center hall and chimney, and library forming the south wing of the house which he labels the "new house." He also notes the westernmost room on the south wing as an addition of c. 1740, and the various rooms on the northwest side of the house within the L formed by the two wings as a second addition, probably from the nineteenth century.

3. Important old views: There is a photograph, c. 1850, in Perkins, Old Houses of the Antient Town of Norwich, 1660-1800, p. 282.
4. Sources of Information:
 - (a) Ada R. Chase, an article on the fireplace in the southwest room of the Bradford-Huntington House in the Bulletin (Norwich, Connecticut), October 8, 1935.
 - (b) Ada R. Chase, "History in Towns: Norwich, Connecticut," Antiques, June, 1961, pp. 560-565.
 - (c) Thomas M. Crosby, Jr., "The Bradford Huntington House, Norwich, Connecticut" (Student paper in office of Prof. Carroll L. V. Meeks, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; December 15, 1958).
 - (d) Mary E. Perkins, Old Houses of the Antient Town of Norwich, 1660-1800 (Norwich, Connecticut: 1895), pp. 282-287.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The Huntington family was one of the original families to settle Norwich and remained prominent in Town affairs through many generations. George Washington is supposed to have visited General Jabez Huntington in this house on April 8, 1776.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: This is a large frame house, built in different stages at an early date, with many interesting original features.
2. Condition of fabric: The house is well maintained and in excellent condition.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: The house is 2-1/2 stories high and L-shaped. One wing of the house, facing south, is

18' x 45' (five bays), with a center chimney type plan, one room deep. The other wing of the house projects from the rear of the south wing, and faces east. It is 27' x 36', also with a center chimney type plan.

2. Foundations: Random stone.
3. Wall construction: Timber frame with plank walls and partitions, covered with clapboards with an average 3" exposure, except on the north with an average 5" exposure.
4. Porches: There is a small, one-story porch at the entrance to the north wing, and a screened porch on the back, or northwest, side of the house.
5. Chimneys: Each of the two wings has a large center chimney of brick, and there are two smaller chimneys on the northwest side of the house.
6. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are two entrances alongside each other on the east side of the north wing. One has a two leaf door, the other a single leaf, both with paneled wood doors hung on wrought-iron strap hinges. The entrance on the south side of the south wing has a six-panel door with side lights, and is apparently not contemporaneous with the wing.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The north wing has double hung, wood windows with combinations of nine light sash over six light, or twelve over eight. The south wing has double hung, wood windows with combinations of six light sash over nine light sash, nine over six, nine over nine, eight over twelve, or twelve over twelve. There are no exterior shutters on the house, but the c. 1850 photo in Perkins, Old Houses of the Antient Town of Norwich, 1660-1800, shows the house with them.
7. Roof
 - a. Shape, covering: Gambrel roofs on both wings, covered with wood shingles.
 - b. Eaves: Slightly projecting, boxed, molded eaves.

C. Technical Description of Interiors

1. Floor Plans: The south wing of the house, with a center chimney type plan one room deep, is called the "new house" by Thomas Crosby. The room to the east of the chimney is

- a living room, that to the west of the chimney is now a library. A third room on the first floor of the south wing, west of the library, is a narrow den which Crosby calls "addition number one." The north wing of the house, which projects from the rear of the south wing and faces east, has a center chimney with a dining room to the south and an old dining room to the north. Crosby calls this portion the "old house." Aligned behind the old house are a stair hall, porch, breakfast room and kitchen which Crosby calls "addition number two." Bedrooms on the second floor are arranged about like the first floor plan.
2. Stairways: The main stairway, opposite the entrance in the south wing, is a U-shaped, left-hand, open newel, open string stair with scroll cut ornament on the front string. The railing has three turned balusters per step, turned newel posts, and a handrail that is rectangular in section but shaped in long sweeping curves in elevation. The rear stairway behind the north wing is apparently later. It is a straight run, open string stair with a molded handrail, two turned balusters per step, and a wide board wainscot along the wall opposite the railing. There is a top lighted entrance from the rear opposite the stairway.
 3. Flooring: Wide board floors throughout.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior partitions are plastered plank walls, board walls, or paneled walls. Some of the plastered walls are papered. The heavy timber frame of the building is exposed in most rooms with beaded edges. Ceilings are plastered except in the library where the flooring and structure above are exposed including a chamfered summer beam. There is an exposed, cased summer beam in the living room. In the old house, ceiling heights on the first floor vary between 6'-3" and 7'-3", and on the second average 7'-0". In the new house, the height from the floor to the plaster ceiling in the living room is 6'-11", and 6'-8" to the bottom of the summer beam. Second floor ceiling heights in the new house average about 6'-6".
 5. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are either wood batten doors or paneled doors, set in unrelieved frames or simple, molded frames.
 6. Trim and interior shutters: The house has unmolded baseboards, and beaded edges on the timber frame where it is exposed on the interior. First floor windows in the new house have paneled interior shutters that slide horizontally in molded frames on the surface of the wall. Windows in the old dining room have hinged, batten shutters on the inside.

7. Hardware: Mostly wrought-iron hardware throughout the house except for some simple wooden latches on inside doors. HABS
CONN-
6. NORTH
5.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: The house has modern central heating supplemented by several original fireplaces. In the old dining room in the old house there is a kitchen fireplace 5'-6" wide by 4'-3" high, with a brick vaulted oven alongside that is nearly circular in plan, about 4'-0" deep, with a front flue. A fireplace on the opposite side of the same chimney in the dining room is 3'-3" wide by 2'-8" high, set in a paneled wall. The fireplace in the living room in the new house is 2'-11" wide by 2'-6" high; the masonry face of the fireplace is plastered and painted red, typical of Norwich. In the library in the new house, opposite the living room fireplace, is a large cooking fireplace, 6'-6" wide by 3'-6" high, built of stone with a stone chimney and a brick hearth. Two stone vaulted ovens, one large and one small, open within the fireplace. On the second floor of the south wing there is a fireplace in the east bedroom, and a closed fireplace in the west bedroom.

D. Site

1. General setting: The house is situated on a large level lot in a small village.
2. Enclosures: The yard is separated from the street, partly by a low stone wall and partly by a log fence.
3. Outbuildings: Attached sheds to the rear are now partly used as garages.
4. Landscaping, gardens, etc.: Informal landscaping with lawn, trees and shrubs.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
June 1961